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ABSTRACT

This document presents guidelines, published by the Maryland State Department of Education, for the evaluation and selection of instructional materials. The first section of the document focuses on the review and selection of textbooks and instructional materials. The second and third sections deal specifically with the selection of materials which insure proper recognition of ethnic and cultural minorities and eliminate sex stereotyping. The final section discusses local school system procedures for selecting materials on family life and human development. (APM)

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GUIDELINES
Evaluation and Selection of INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

ED206771

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GUIDELINES

for the Evaluation and Selection of INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Library Development and Services
School Media Services Office
1981

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INTRODUCTION

The demand for instructional materials in all formats, print and nonprint, is greater today than ever before. Instructional materials play a vital role in the teaching-learning process. As the number and variety of print and nonprint materials increase, it becomes even more important to exercise care in the evaluation and selection of these materials, thereby insuring a quality collection to support the school curriculum. If schools and their library media centers are to provide students and teachers with materials of the highest quality, it is essential that they have a formalized method of selecting and evaluating materials.

Numerous guidelines have been released by the Maryland State Department of Education to assist local personnel with this awesome task. To assist those involved in the evaluation and selection of instructional materials further, a compilation of these documents is being released. These are the *Guidelines for the Review and Selection of Textbooks and Instructional Materials*, State Board Resolution 1976-18, *Guidelines for the Evaluation and Selection of Instructional Materials Which Will Insure Proper Recognition of Ethnic and Cultural Minorities*, State Board Mandate 13.03.02.05, *Selection Guidelines: Elimination of Sex Stereotyping in Instructional Materials*, State Board Resolution 1974-45, and *Selection of Curricular Materials*, Bylaw 13.03.02.01 Family Life and Human Development. The purpose of these publications is to encourage study and meaningful application in either designing new policies or revising existing ones. Selection procedures need regular review if optimum use is to be made of the endless variety of educational materials available today.

The staff member within the Division of Library Development and Services who has been assigned the responsibility to work with the review, evaluation, and selection of instructional materials is Rosa Presberry, Specialist, Special Programs. Persons desiring assistance should contact her.

GUIDELINES for the Review and Selection of Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Introduction

The selection and adoption of textbooks and instructional materials is the responsibility of each local education agency in Maryland. Therefore, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners and each county board of education should have an officially-approved and adopted policy for the selection of textbooks and instructional materials. Such a selection policy should include the following:

- ☐ The nature and scope of collections
- ☐ The governing body legally responsible for the operation of the review and selection program
- ☐ The specific role(s) of the person(s) responsible for the coordination of the selection of materials
- ☐ The objectives of the selection of materials
- ☐ The types of materials for consideration
- ☐ The criteria for the evaluation and selection of materials
- ☐ The selection sources for use as guides in the selection of materials
- ☐ The procedure for the selection of textbooks and instructional materials
- ☐ The procedure for handling gifts, loans, rentals, and free materials
- ☐ The procedure for handling challenged materials
- ☐ The process for the reevaluation of materials in existing collections

The official selection policy provides a procedure for consistent excellence in the choice of materials for use in the teaching-learning process. Also, it serves as a document that can be made available to parents and other citizens for furthering their understanding of the purpose and standards of the selection of textbooks and instructional materials.

When policy statements are cooperatively developed by administrators, teachers, subject specialists, students, parents, and representative citizens from the school community, and are accepted and followed, they provide both guidance and protection for all who are involved in the selection and utilization of materials.

Criteria for special subject areas, such as Family Life and Human Development, are delineated in the Public School Laws of Maryland. According to Bylaw 13.03.02.01, the Maryland State Department of Education has developed and distributed to all local school systems *Guidelines for the Evaluation and Selection of Instructional Materials Which Will Insure Proper Recognition of Ethnic and Cultural Minorities*. The Maryland State Department of Education has also developed procedures "for ensuring the elimination of sex stereotyping in print and nonprint materials" as directed by the Resolution 1974-45. Procedures for the evaluation of career education materials may be found on pages 21-24 of the *Maryland Career Education Resource Notebook*.

Guidelines

All materials should be evaluated in accordance with standards and criteria established and accepted by the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners and each county board of education and should be consistent with the following guidelines:

1. The process for the selection of textbooks and other instructional materials should involve the formal evaluation by and recommendation of administrators, teachers, subject specialists, and media personnel with input from students, parents, and community representatives.
2. Final authority for the acceptance and utilization of all instructional materials should remain with the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners and each county board of education.
3. Within each local school system, textbooks should be made available prior to initial purchase for review and examination by any interested person.
4. The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners and each county board of education should establish procedures which enable parents to examine media center materials upon request.
5. The process of examining and evaluating materials should be continuous and systematic.
6. A file should be maintained containing evaluative statements of all materials that have been examined and reviewed. For materials not purchased, the reviews may be maintained for a shorter period of time than for the materials purchased.
7. All forms of print and nonprint materials should be included in the selection policy.
8. Specific criteria should be established for each type of material and/or subject area. The same criteria should be applied to gifts, loans, and other materials selected. The following criteria should be considered when evaluating and selecting textbooks; textbook content should:
   - ☐ Be accurate and objective
   - ☐ Represent the broad spectrum of viewpoints of given topics
   - ☐ Be correlated to visual materials
   - ☐ Contain bibliographies reflecting multi-media materials

- ☐ Be appropriate to levels of learning
- ☐ Be authoritative, realistic, factual
- ☐ Be arranged chronologically and/or systematically
- ☐ Reflect the pluralistic character and culture of the American people
- ☐ Be free of sexual stereotyping
- ☐ Represent various ethnic groups

The following criteria should be considered when evaluating and selecting media; curricula materials should:

- ☐ Be relevant to today's world
- ☐ Represent artistic, historic, and literary qualities
- ☐ Reflect problems, aspirations, attitudes, and ideals of a society
- ☐ Be pertinent to the curriculum
- ☐ Contribute to the objectives of the instructional program
- ☐ Be appropriate to the level of the user
- ☐ Represent differing viewpoints on controversial subjects
- ☐ Provide a stimulus to creativity

Technical materials should:

- ☐ Be of acceptable technical quality: clear narration and sound, synchronized pictures and sound
- ☐ Be readable; typographically well balanced

General criteria which might be applicable to the selection of various pieces of equipment to accompany the materials are:

- ☐ Physical characteristics
- ☐ Electrical characteristics
- ☐ Optical characteristics
- ☐ Audio characteristics
- ☐ Transport characteristics

9. The selection of instructional materials should reflect the goals of education for the local education agency. The current curriculum trends, methods of instruction, modes of learning, the availability of materials and equipment to meet the various levels of learning, and the individual student needs within a particular school community.

10. There should be an abundance of materials in all formats at many levels of difficulty, with a diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view – ethnic, religious, political, and cultural.

11. Reliable, unbiased professional selection aids, lists, and reviewing sources should be used as guides. This system-wide list of selection sources should be made available upon request from the local school community.

12. A procedure should be established for the reconsideration of materials which have been questioned by an individual or group of individuals. The procedure should include the following areas: (1) the Process which clearly defines the steps to be followed; (2) a Reconsideration Form for Textbooks and Instructional materials; and (3) the Appeal – a formal review of the textbook or instructional material questioned.

13. Appropriate personnel should reconsider the item being questioned according to the adopted procedure. If the complainant is not satisfied, further appeals should be directed to the person responsible as indicated in the procedure.

14. The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners and each county board of education should serve as the final local authority when textbooks and instructional materials are being reconsidered.

Resolution No. 1976 - 18

Re: Review and Selection of Textbooks and Instructional Materials

WHEREAS, The selection of instructional materials should reflect the goals of education of each local education agency; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That each local school system shall establish policies and procedures for reviewing and selecting print and nonprint materials to be used in the instructional program in accordance with guidelines established by the Maryland State Department of Education, and be it further

RESOLVED, That each local school system shall submit to the Division of Library Development and Services, Maryland State Department of Education, the policies and procedures established for the selection and evaluation of print and nonprint materials.

GUIDELINES for the Evaluation and Selection of Instructional Materials which will insure proper recognition of Ethnic and Cultural Minorities

6

"Guidelines for the Evaluation and Selection of Instructional Materials Which Will Insure Proper Recognition of Ethnic and Cultural Minorities" is the outcome of the State Mandate: Bylaw 13.03.02.05 "The State Department of Education shall develop . . . Criteria for use by local boards in evaluating and selecting instructional materials for schools which will insure proper recognition of ethnic and cultural minorities."

Each school system has the responsibility for providing climates of learning, programs, and materials which give all pupils full and accurate information concerning the role of all minority groups in the development of America, of their legitimate place in the history of our nation and the world, of the contribution in the fields of science, social science, literature, art and entertainment, and the intrinsic value of each individual regardless of his race, creed, color, or economic status. Schools with any minorities represented in their populations have the additional responsibility for providing programs and materials which assist these pupils in identifying themselves as worthwhile individuals in a majority-based society.

The purpose of these *Guidelines* is not to describe the climates and the programs, but to provide criteria for the evaluation and selection of materials to support them. The *Guidelines* are general in nature. They apply equally to materials concerning any minority group; e.g., blacks, migrant workers, American Indians, or any group whose language and cultural backgrounds are different from the majority. However, examples used refer to one minority group – Black Americans. This emphasis on the black minority group is deliberate as it is felt that this group presents an over-riding problem at the present time. There is a pressing need for full, accurate, and unbiased information on the blacks who have often been excluded from factual material and depicted as menials or stereotypes in literature and art.

"Instructional materials" mean textbooks, library books, periodicals, pamphlets, programmed materials, tape and disc recordings, art prints, pictures and study prints, films, filmstrips, slides, and transparencies – in other words, material in any format used in any manner which influences the pupil's learning and the teacher's teaching.

To be effective, instructional materials must be used by pupils and teachers; and the extent to which they are used is largely dependent upon the climate and the programs provided. Any evaluation of the effectiveness of the materials provided must lean heavily on the use made of them. Other factors must be considered in any evaluation: the scope of the collection of both print and nonprint items, the extent to which biased and out-of-date materials are discarded, and the procedures that promote easy use and accessibility. No collection should be evaluated solely on the basis of recent additions to the print collection.

General Criteria

1. Materials selected should contribute toward developing an attitude of inquiry and a growth in factual knowledge; stimulating literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards; and helping pupils to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
2. Materials are sometimes selected which are harmful to young people of minority groups; e.g., not all characters who are black must of necessity be portrayed as good or exemplary in behavior, but if they are portrayed as bad or cowardly there must be a reason other than the fact that they are black. The representation of a character in an unkind or degrading manner may seem inconsequential to a white child but may contribute toward the failure of a black child to develop a healthy self-image. It may also cause him to reject all other materials available for his use.
3. Illustrations in both print and nonprint materials should be carefully evaluated. Many children judge materials by the illustrations. If they portray abnormally-proportioned, repulsive characters, children are certain to reject the materials. Children do not expect every character to be beautiful — in fact, they identify more readily if characters look more like they are likely to meet in everyday life. Sometimes illustrations err in subtle ways; however, they may perpetuate the feelings of inferiority in the black by portraying all the authority figures as white.

4. Materials selected should provide psychological support for learning by making it possible for blacks to identify themselves with individuals or groups. Children who may not regularly associate with children different from themselves should have every opportunity to develop respect for the inherent worth and rights of all persons through the use of these materials. No materials which humiliate anyone should be included. No matter how entertaining the material is, one group of children should not be entertained at the expense of another. For example, the evaluator needs to ask himself, "How would I feel, using this material, if I were black? What attitude might I form if I were white?"
5. Another aspect to be considered by materials for today's youth is the importance of emphasis on life as it really is; e.g., in assessing materials for their realism, it is vital that ghetto life be depicted accurately. Attention should be focused on the strengths and positive personal values that ghetto residents convey to their children in their efforts to master their environment.
6. In considering the constructive potential of biracial materials for children and young people, one does not ask that they be antiseptic and shrink from portraying harsh realities. Increasingly, authors and producers must use these realities to foster awareness and sensitivity among young users; and, specifically in the case of blacks, the materials must help them to know better their own strengths and power to bring about change.

Criteria for Factual Material

1. Informational material should be factual and objective. Generalizations, editorializing, and platitudes should be avoided. Whenever opinions are given, they must be clearly identified as such.
2. Political, economic, and social evils should receive frank treatment rather than be defended, minimized, or ignored. Controversial and unpleasant matters should not be avoided.
3. The material should reflect authoritative, comprehensive, and current research. It must seek to remove myths and interpretations which have obscured the proper history, roles, and contributions of various minority groups, particularly Blacks, and their prominent representatives in American life.
4. All aspects of the subject — both negative and positive should be given reasonable attention. Material must treat with historical accuracy and frankness present and past tensions and intergroup relations, as well as the undesirable consequences of withholding rights and freedom from any citizen. It should present effective ways in which such problems are and have been solved through the harmonious interaction of individuals.
5. The material should consider minority participation in all subject disciplines. All historical and present facets of American life covered by the curriculum and by the instructional materials collection must include materials on racial and ethnic minority participation. For example, Benjamin Banneker, the inventor, and Matthew Henson, the explorer, should be included in material on American inventors and on Arctic exploration. Awareness of a multi-ethnic, multiracial society should be an important factor in the selection and evaluation process.
6. The range of human characteristics should be described so as to eliminate the danger of stereotyping according to race, religion, or national origin or ancestry. Such matters as cultural pluralism and diverse factors affecting groups should be included in print and nonprint materials.

8

Criteria for Imaginative Materials

Novels, stories, poetry, and non-factual films which by their qualities of style or treatment offer experience of an imaginative nature should increase the social sensitivity of a young person and help him to extend his experiences to gain insights, appreciation, and understanding of himself and others. Creative works should be selected which avoid occupational stereotypes and misleading overgeneralizations concerning the ethnic background, culture, and traditions of minority Americans. For example, books should picture blacks as holding all sorts of positions and should portray them as people faced with the universal problems of all mankind: earning a living, hating and loving, rejoicing and grieving, experiencing success and failure, learning to find their way through a complex world of ideas, and living with other people. Since dialogue and pictures are very close to characterization, the language used by characters and pictures of them should be honest and convincing. The emotional interpretations attached to pictures and language demand careful analysis and critical review. Words which may strain relations between individuals and groups should be de-emphasized.

Print and nonprint materials for secondary school readers should include many works drawn from the field of literature for adults. These materials should be selected because of their timeliness, their honesty in presenting provocative ideas and factual information, and their appeal to young people who have the intellectual and emotional maturity to appreciate them.

implementation

These guidelines constitute the basic criteria to be utilized in the selection of all instructional media for schools in the state. They are to be disseminated, interpreted, and discussed with the entire educational community, lay groups, and students throughout the state.

Each local education agency will report annually, as part of the Status of Ethnic/Cultural Instructional Programs and Integration in Maryland Public Schools, on the extent to which specific steps have been taken to effect implementation of the guidelines.

1. The State Superintendent of School will present the guidelines to the entire professional staff of the State Department of Education and to the superintendents of local school systems.
2. Professional staff members of the State Department of Education will be alerted to the importance of the criteria in the selection of all instructional materials and the use made of them.
3. A staff member of the Division of Library Development and Services will be assigned the responsibility for assisting the local education agencies in the implementation of the guidelines.
4. The regional coordinators will have a full discussion of the guidelines at regional meetings.
5. A portion of any funds available to the State for the development of school library/media collections will be used to provide materials which promote improved understanding of cultural and ethnic minorities.
6. Superintendents of schools will develop plans and procedures for implementation of the guidelines which will insure the involvement of school boards, school personnel, lay groups, and students; will assign responsibility for implementation, evaluation, and reporting to one staff member; and will develop library/media collections in the individual schools in accordance with the guidelines.

RESOLUTION MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

August 28, 1974

Resolution No. 1974-48 **Re: Sex Stereotyping in Textbooks and Other Instructional Materials** 9

WHEREAS, Federal and State requirements established in the Maryland Equal Rights Amendment and Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 must be implemented; and

WHEREAS, Instructional materials have an effect on the development of self-identity and on the sense of belonging in a pluralistic society; and

WHEREAS, Materials that present girls and women in inferior or limited stereotyped roles tend to inculcate attitudes and values that are discriminatory and limit opportunities for women in today's world; and

WHEREAS, Textbooks and library materials used in the schools often do not reflect the changing societal attitudes toward traditional roles assigned to women and men solely on the basis of sex; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education directs the Maryland State Department of Education to work with the local school systems to develop procedures for ensuring the elimination of sex stereotyping in print and nonprint materials; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education urges each local school system to implement procedures for the review, selection, and purchase of print and nonprint materials.

Adopted August 28, 1974

SELECTION GUIDELINES

Elimination of Sex Stereotyping in Instructional Materials

10

When evaluating and selecting instructional materials, it is recommended that the following criteria be used as guidelines:

General Criteria*

Does the material in both its textual content and illustrations:

1. Evidence on the part of writers, artists, and editors a sensitivity toward prejudice, stereotypes, and the use of material which would be offensive to either sex?
2. Suggest, by omission or commission, or by overemphasis or underemphasis, that any segment of our population is more or less worthy, more or less capable, or more or less important in the mainstream of American life?
3. Utilize numerous opportunities for full, fair, accurate, and balanced treatment of both sexes?
4. Provide recognition for both sexes by placing them in positions of leadership?
5. Depict both males and females in situations which exhibit them as fine and worthy models to emulate?
6. Give comprehensive, broadly ranging, and well-planned representation to both sexes — in art and science, in history, mathematics, and literature, and in all other areas of life and culture?
7. Portray men and women working together in such a way as to build positive images, mutual understanding and respect, full and unqualified acceptance, and commitment to ensure equal opportunity for all?
8. Assist students to recognize clearly the basic similarities among all members of the human race and the uniqueness and worth of every individual?
9. Help students appreciate the many important contributions to our civilization made by both men and women, emphasizing that every human group has its list of achievers, thinkers, writers, artists, scientists, builders, and political leaders?

Implementation

City and county school systems in Maryland should develop plans and procedures for the implementation of guidelines for the evaluation and selection of instructional materials which avoid sex-role stereotyping.

The established procedure should be ongoing and should be reviewed periodically to determine its effectiveness. Decisions relative to reordering or replacing of materials already in use should be based on these guidelines, and materials currently in use which do not meet the established criteria should be phased out as soon as this is economically feasible.

*Adapted from A.S.C.D. resolution — March 1974.

In the process of evaluating and selecting print and nonprint materials, the following checklist should be used along with the Selection Guidelines to implement Resolution 1974-45.

Yes	No	
☐	☐	Are the writers, illustrators, and editors sensitive to the inclusion of materials that might offend either sex?
☐	☐	Is there a suggestion that any segment of the population is more or less worthy, capable, or important than another?
☐	☐	Is the treatment of each sex balanced in a full, fair, and accurate manner?
☐	☐	Are both sexes depicted in leadership roles?
☐	☐	Are there male and female models worthy of emulation?
☐	☐	Are both sexes represented in discussions about art, science, history, mathematics, literature, and all other areas of life and culture?
☐	☐	Are the sexes shown working together as equal partners?
☐	☐	Is there recognition of the similarities as well as the unique traits in people?
☐	☐	Are both sexes depicted as contributors to our culture?

SELECTION of Curricular Materials, Bylaw 13.03.02.01 Family Life and Human Development

12

The following information on the selection of curricular materials is extracted from Bylaw 13.03.02.01 Family Life and Human Development

Part III. Selection of Curricular Materials

Each local school system shall establish procedures for evaluating and selecting printed and audiovisual materials to be used in all phases of Family Life and Human Development programs.

The local system shall appoint a joint committee of educators and representatives of the community which shall examine all printed and audiovisual materials proposed to be used in the schools. Its recommendation shall be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools and the local board of education for final action. The local system shall use its existing procedure for evaluating reading level, factual content, and general suitability of material for different levels of instruction.

The printed and audiovisual materials shall meet the established criteria which follow. No material shall be used at the elementary school level which portrays the male and female sex organs in juxtaposition, and no material shall be used at any level which discusses or portrays erotic techniques of sexual intercourse. Each school shall provide special opportunities for parents to view all instructional materials to be used in the program before the materials are used in the classroom. Materials used shall be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Family Life and Human Development program. Such materials shall be chosen with regard to reading ability and level of understanding of students who are to use the materials. Each local school system shall publish at regular intervals a list of its approved printed and audiovisual materials.

Each local school system shall submit to the Division of Instruction of the Maryland State Department of Education the policies and procedures and criteria for selection and evaluation of printed and audiovisual materials and the approved published list of these materials.